



Milwaukee County

Transportation, Public Works & Transit Committee

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For Immediate Release

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WALKER APPOINTEE NOT FOLLOWING ADOPTED COUNTY POLICY

Committee requests legal input on recalling George Torres from RTA

Milwaukee, WI – At this morning’s Committee meeting, several Supervisors expressed concern that the County’s appointee to the Regional Transit Authority (RTA), Public Works Director George Torres, is ignoring adopted County policy in reference to identifying a dedicated funding source for mass transit. Torres was appointed by County Executive Scott Walker and confirmed by the County Board.

The policy states the “highest priority” of the Regional Transit Authority is to “identify a non-property tax dedicated funding alternative for the ongoing operation of the Milwaukee County Transit System’s rubber tire bus service.”

However, County Executive Walker directed Torres to vote for a 650% tax increase on rental cars for the Kenosha-Racine-Milwaukee (KRM) commuter rail proposal, while ignoring the needs for dedicated mass transit funding for Milwaukee County residents. County policy states the highest priority is our existing transit system. Torres’ vote to support KRM and ignore Milwaukee County transit violated that adopted County policy.

Secondly, some Committee members feel the administration has chosen to seek a non-property tax *non sales-tax* dedicated funding source, thus altering the spirit and intent of the adopted resolution.

By law, the County Executive and his appointees must administer this adopted policy. As a result, Supervisor Richard D. Nyklewicz, Jr., made a motion to request a County Corporation Counsel opinion on whether Torres can be recalled from his appointment to the RTA for not following adopted County policy in relation to transit. The Committee approved Supervisor Nyklewicz’s motion on a 5-1 vote.

The Committee voted 6-0 to refer a proposal for a .25% sales tax and 3% hotel/motel sales tax to fund transit services to staff for review. Supervisors also called upon the County Executive to bring forward a solid and viable dedicated funding proposal that has enough support to pass both houses of the State Legislature and earn the support of the Governor.

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